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ABSTRACT

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 presents states with new opportunities and flexibility to design programs for teen parents. This report summarizes how welfare reform has changed the environment for teen parents dependent on welfare. The report presents research findings on the costs of supporting teen parents and the benefits of delaying childbirth, and summarizes the provisions of the new legislation that relate directly to teen parents and state services for this population. The report then presents the components of a comprehensive policy for teen parents based on recommendations of researchers, state program administrators, direct service providers, and policymakers who met in 1996 to discuss the impact of the new welfare legislation on teen parents. The role of state governors in developing an effective and comprehensive teen parent policy is also explored. The report's four appendices include summaries of findings from evaluations of teen parent programs, acknowledgment of state experimentation in serving teen parents, a listing of the participants in the policymaking meeting, and a listing of information resources. (JPB)

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**NATIONAL
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Employment and
Social Services Policy
Studies Division

Center for
Best Practices

Serving Teen Parents in a Welfare Reform Environment

by Helene Stebbins

Since their initial meeting in 1908 to discuss interstate water problems, the Governors have worked through the National Governors' Association to deal collectively with issues of public policy and governance. The association's ongoing mission is to support the work of the Governors by providing a bipartisan forum to help shape and implement national policy and to solve state problems.

The members of the National Governors' Association are the Governors of the fifty states, the territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the Virgin Islands, and the commonwealths of the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. The association has a nine-member Executive Committee and three standing committees—on Economic Development and Commerce, Human Resources, and Natural Resources. Through NGA's committees, the Governors examine and develop policy and address key state and national issues. Special task forces often are created to focus gubernatorial attention on federal legislation or on state-level issues.

The association works closely with the administration and Congress on state-federal policy issues through its offices in the Hall of the States in Washington, D.C. The association serves as a vehicle for sharing knowledge of innovative programs among the states and provides technical assistance and consultant services to Governors on a wide range of management and policy issues.

The Center for Best Practices is a vehicle for sharing knowledge about innovative state activities, exploring the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and providing technical assistance to states. The center works in a number of policy fields, including agriculture and rural development, economic development, education, energy and environment, health, social services, technology, trade, transportation, and workforce development.

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Contents

v	Acknowledgements
vii	Executive Summary
1	Introduction
3	State Interest in Investing in Teen Parent Programs
5	Teen Parents and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996
5	<i>TANF Eligibility Provisions</i>
6	<i>TANF Provisions Modified for Teen Parents</i>
7	<i>New Flexibility for States</i>
9	Components of a Comprehensive Teen Parent Policy
10	<i>Provide Alternative or Enhanced Education Opportunities</i>
11	<i>Focus on Improving Child Outcomes</i>
12	<i>Engage the Fathers</i>
12	<i>Include the Individual, Family, School, and Community in the Design of Interventions</i>
13	<i>Involve the Community</i>
14	<i>Establish Clear and Immediate Consequences for Behaviors</i>
15	<i>Ensure Flexibility to Pursue Strategies That Work</i>
16	<i>Streamline Agency Services and Unify the Message to Teen Parents</i>
16	<i>Employ Well-Trained Staff and Give Them Reasonable Workloads</i>
16	<i>Ensure a Safe, Nurturing, and Structured Living Environment</i>
17	<i>Allocate Necessary Resources and Support</i>
19	The Role of Governors in Developing an Effective Teen Parent Policy
19	<i>Make a Commitment to Helping Teen Parents</i>
20	<i>Engage Stakeholders to Develop a Comprehensive Policy</i>
20	<i>Track Results and Expect Improvements</i>
20	<i>Evaluate Programs and Share Best Practices</i>
21	Conclusion
23	Appendix A: Evaluations of Teen Parent Programs
27	Appendix B: State Innovations for Teen Parents Under the Family Support Act
29	Appendix C: Meeting Participants
31	Appendix D: Resources for More Information on Teen Parents
33	Endnotes
35	Bibliography

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Executive Summary

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 presents states with new opportunities and flexibility to design programs for teen parents. This report summarizes how welfare reform has changed the environment for teen parents receiving cash assistance and recommends ways that states can improve services for teen parents who are dependent on welfare. States are encouraged to use the opportunity and flexibility provided by the new legislation to design comprehensive programs to help teen parents become economically self-sufficient.

vii

States have a compelling interest in developing effective policies that target teen parents. Each year billions of dollars are spent on adolescent mothers and their children to cover the costs of cash assistance, food stamps, medical services, foster care, and incarceration. Giving birth as a teen dramatically increases the difficulties that new parents and their infants face in becoming healthy, self-sufficient adults. The high incidence of long-term dependency among teen parents also makes them especially vulnerable to time limits on the receipt of welfare benefits. Designing programs that address these difficulties will reduce the costs to taxpayers and improve the outcomes for teen parents and their children.

A state using the new Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant to assist teen parents must abide by the provisions in Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, unless it is operating under a waiver from the federal government. Title I limits eligibility for TANF assistance to teen parents who are attending school and are living in an adult-supervised setting. Although states must abide by the restrictions on federal TANF funds, state funds that were previously used to match federal funds for Aid to Families with Dependent Children have fewer restrictions. Given this new flexibility, states will want to consider the impact of the TANF restrictions on both teens and their children and to explore all of the funding options for helping teen parents.

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The challenge is that after years of experimentation more is known about what does not work in the design of programs to help teen parents become self-sufficient than about what does work. States will want to build on the strategies that research shows are effective in serving teen parents and evaluate the effectiveness of new programs for helping teen parents become economically independent.

In December 1996, more than thirty researchers, state program administrators, direct service providers, and policymakers convened in Washington, D.C., to discuss the impact of the new welfare legislation on teen parents. The meeting brought together policymakers and experts in teen parenthood to develop recommendations for states as they design their welfare reform policies. Meeting participants encouraged states to create programs for teen parents that:

- provide alternative or enhanced education opportunities;
- focus on improving child outcomes;
- engage the fathers;
- involve the individual, family, school, and community in the design of interventions;
- establish clear and immediate consequences for behaviors;
- ensure flexibility to pursue strategies that work;
- streamline agency services and unify the message to teen parents;
- employ well-trained staff and give them reasonable workloads;
- ensure a safe, nurturing, and structured living environment; and
- allocate necessary resources and support.

The success of these programs will be measured by how well states move teen parents off of welfare and into jobs. Helping teen parents gain employment and become self-sufficient will continue to be a challenge for states, but Governors can help by creating support for an effective and comprehensive teen parent policy. Each state will develop a teen parent policy that reflects its own priorities and resources, but Governors can improve the impact of the policy by making a commitment to helping teen parents, bringing stakeholders together, tracking results and expecting improvements, evaluating programs, and sharing best practices.

Introduction

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 presents states with new opportunities and flexibility to design programs for teen parents. Title I, the block grant for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), consolidates several categorical funding streams and reduces the restrictions on the use of federal funds. Title I also includes new requirements for teen parents that could affect how schools and social service agencies interact with minor teen parents receiving public assistance. These new requirements seek to achieve the goals of ending dependency, reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

This report discusses the reasons why states may want to consider developing policies that target teen parents. It also summarizes how welfare reform has changed the environment for teen parents receiving cash assistance. Finally, states are encouraged to use the flexibility of the 1996 legislation and the recommendations in this report to design comprehensive programs to help teen parents become economically self-sufficient.

Chapter 1 describes the teen parent populations that are dependent on cash assistance. It also presents research findings on the costs of supporting teen parents and the benefits of delaying childbirth until after age nineteen. Chapter 2 summarizes the provisions in Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 that relate directly to teen parents and outlines the new flexibility states have to serve teen parents. Chapter 3 presents the components of a comprehensive policy for teen parents based on the recommendations of researchers, state program administrators, direct service providers, and policymakers who met in December 1996 to discuss the impact of the new welfare legislation on teen parents. Chapter 4 explores the role of Governors in developing an effective and comprehensive teen parent policy. Appendix A summarizes the findings from evaluations of teen parent programs. Appendix B acknowledges state experimentation in serving teen parents through the waiver process prior to the 1996 act. Appendix C lists the participants in the December meeting, and Appendix D lists resources to contact for more information on teen parents.

State Interest in Investing in Teen Parent Programs

States have a compelling interest in developing policies that target teen parents. A policy that helps teen parents become economically self-sufficient will reduce the high incidence of long-term dependency among teen parents and the high cost to taxpayers to support teen parents. Economic self-sufficiency will also improve the outcomes for teen parents and their children and reduce the number of welfare recipients who reach the time limit on the receipt of welfare benefits. The challenge to states is to develop teen parent policies that are effective in helping teen parents gain economic self-sufficiency.

3

Although the teen parent population is not large in absolute numbers, women who give birth as teens face significant difficulties in becoming self-sufficient. In 1995 approximately 7 percent of women receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were teen parents. Less than 2 percent, or 66,000, were adolescent teen parents (i.e., ages seventeen and younger).¹ However, more than 70 percent of unmarried adolescent mothers will receive cash assistance within five years of giving birth and 40 percent of them will remain dependent on the welfare system for five years or longer.² Approximately half of the AFDC households at any point in time were headed by women who gave birth as teenagers.³

A recent report by the Robin Hood Foundation confirms the poor outcomes for many teen parent families and the high cost of adolescent pregnancy to taxpayers. More than \$5.6 billion is spent annually on adolescent mothers and their children to cover the costs of cash assistance, food stamps, medical services, foster care, and incarceration. An additional \$1.3 billion is lost in forgone tax revenue. The daughters of adolescent mothers have a 50 percent chance of having a child before they reach eighteen, and their sons are more than two- and one-half times more likely to spend time in prison.

A comparison of the maternal and child outcomes of mothers who give birth before their eighteenth birthday and those who delay childbirth until age twenty or twenty-one reveals that adolescent mothers:

- are 50 percent less likely to complete high school;
- spend 57 percent more time as single parents during the first thirteen years of parenthood; and
- are 50 percent more likely to become dependent on the welfare system.

The children of adolescent mothers:

- are 50 percent more likely to be low-birthweight babies;
- will suffer poorer health and receive half the level of medical care and treatment;
- are two to three times less likely to be rated excellent by their teachers, and are 50 percent more likely to repeat a grade; and
- are twice as likely to be the victims of abuse and neglect.

Source: Rebecca Maynard, ed., *Kids Having Kids* (New York: Robin Hood Foundation, 1996).

The research is clear. Giving birth as a teen dramatically increases the difficulties that new parents and their infants face in becoming healthy, self-sufficient adults. The research is also clear about how difficult it is to design a program to help teen parents overcome the obstacles of teen parenthood. (See Appendix A for summaries of evaluations of teen parent programs.) The 1996 welfare reform legislation gives states more flexibility to develop comprehensive programs for teen parents, but it is unclear how these programs should be designed. States will want to build on the strategies that the research shows are effective in serving teen parents and evaluate the effectiveness of new programs for helping teen parents become self-sufficient. Learning from the research and contributing to the search for effective programs will improve the knowledge of where and how to target resources in order to receive the greatest returns on investments.

Teen Parents and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996

Title I, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant, consolidates funding from the federal AFDC, Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training, and Emergency Assistance programs. Title I also includes provisions that target teen parents to achieve the overall goals of ending dependency, reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.⁴ A state using the TANF block grant to assist teen parents must abide by the provisions in Title I, unless it is operating under a waiver from the federal government. States receiving waivers prior to the 1996 law have the option to continue the programs designed under the waivers until the waivers expire.

The act also gives states unprecedented flexibility in the design and funding of programs for needy families. Although states must abide by the restrictions on the federal TANF funds, state funds that were previously used to match federal AFDC funds have fewer restrictions. Under Title I, a state must spend state dollars on families eligible for TANF assistance at a level equal to 75 percent of state spending in fiscal 1994. However, the time limit on the receipt of welfare benefits and some of the teen parent eligibility restrictions do not apply to state funds. States also have the flexibility to segment the population receiving cash assistance into programs funded with TANF block grant dollars or with more flexible state dollars.

TANF Eligibility Provisions

The eligibility requirements for teen parents to receive federal TANF assistance are complicated because they do not apply to all teen parents uniformly. For example, the rules for

receiving TANF assistance change depending on the teen's age, marital status, and status as the head of the household. However, ineligibility for cash assistance because of failure to abide by the federal law is limited to the teen parent. The teen's child is still eligible to receive benefits through a representative payee, though such an arrangement is not guaranteed.

Requirement to Stay in School

States may not provide federal TANF funds to unmarried, custodial teen parents below age eighteen who are not participating in high school or other equivalent education and training programs. The legislation allows states to define acceptable alternative education and training programs. States also have the flexibility to define participation in these activities, whether it is based on attendance, grades, or other measures of progress. Custodial teen parents are exempt from this requirement if they are married, or if their child is less than twelve weeks old.

Requirement to Live at Home

States may not provide federal TANF funds to unmarried, custodial teen parents below age eighteen who do not live in adult-supervised settings, unless the state waives this requirement. These teen parents must live with a parent, legal guardian, or other adult relative, unless the state determines that this living arrangement is not in their best interest. The state will then assist the teen parent and child in locating a second-chance home, maternity home, or other appropriate adult-supervised living arrangement. The legislation does give states the flexibility to determine that the teen's current living situation is appropriate, even if no adult is present. In determining eligibility, states also have the flexibility to deem the income of the parent or adult guardian as available to the teen, or to completely disregard this income in calculating the teen's income.

TANF Provisions Modified for Teen Parents

All other provisions within Title I also apply to teen parents receiving TANF benefits. The following provisions are those with special modifications for teen parents.

Time Limit on TANF Assistance

Teen parents below age eighteen, or age nineteen if they are attending school full time, who are not the head of a household are not subject to the sixty-month time limit on the receipt of TANF assistance. Custodial teen parents who are the head of a household or are married to the head of a household are subject to the sixty-month time limit. However, the definition of a household is determined by the state. For example, the state decides whether a teen living away from her parents but in an adult-supervised setting is a head of household. States may exempt up to 20 percent of the TANF caseload from the sixty-month time limit.

Requirement to Work

Teen parents who are the head of a household are included in the calculation of the work participation rate for the TANF work requirement. However, a state may count a teen

parent who is single, is serving as the head of the household, and is maintaining satisfactory school attendance as meeting the work participation requirement.⁵ The teen must be below age twenty and maintain satisfactory attendance in a secondary school, or an equivalent program, or participate in education directly related to employment. For teen parents meeting the work requirement by attending secondary school, participation is defined as school attendance, and states define the level of attendance that is considered satisfactory. For teen parents who meet the work requirement by participating in education directly related to employment, participation is defined as a minimum of twenty hours per week in fiscal 1997 and fiscal 1998. The number of hours per week increases by five hours in fiscal 1999 and fiscal 2000, but Congress has indicated a willingness to cap the required work hours at twenty for teen parents.⁶ The state is limited in the percentage of individuals engaged in education, either secondary education or vocational educational training, that it can count toward the work participation rate. (Vocational educational training is not defined in federal law.) The legislation allows the state to count participation in education as work for up to 20 percent of the TANF caseload, but the congressional intent was to limit the percentage to 20 percent of those engaged in work; 20 percent of those engaged in work is a much smaller percentage than 20 percent of the entire caseload. It is possible that the 105th Congress will change this provision to conform to congressional intent.

The legislation gives states some flexibility to ease the work requirement for teen parents. States have the option to exempt from the work requirement single, custodial parents who are caring for a child below age one. They may disregard such individuals in determining the work participation rate for up to twelve months. However, minor teen parents who meet the work requirement through education are not eligible for this exemption. Single parents with children below age six also cannot be sanctioned for failure to work if they can demonstrate an inability to obtain needed

child care. States may not disregard individuals who fail to find child care in determining the work participation rate.

Eligibility for Medicaid

States have the option to terminate Medicaid eligibility for certain individuals who fail to work and subsequently have their TANF benefits reduced. Teen parents who are the head of their household for the purpose of receiving TANF benefits may be subject to this provision at state option.

Receipt of Food Stamps

The new legislation eliminates the opportunity for teen parents living with their parent(s) to establish a separate household for the purpose of receiving food stamp benefits.

State Bonuses for Reducing Out-of-Wedlock Births

Five states will receive bonuses for reducing the number of children born to parents who are not married, while simultaneously decreasing the abortion rate below the state's rate in 1995.⁷ Although this provision does not directly target teen parents, the majority of teen parents eligible for TANF assistance are not married. However, teen parents account for only 31 percent of all nonmarital births.⁸ The bonus is \$20 million for up to five states. If fewer than five states qualify, the bonus increases to \$25 million.

New Flexibility for States

States have additional flexibility to serve teen parents based on the source of the dollars used to fund the program. States now have two sources of funding: the federal TANF block grant and the state dollars that were previously used to match federal AFDC funds. Under the new law, a state is required to maintain state spending at 75 percent of the historic state spending level.⁹ TANF funds and state funds have different restrictions. Funds previously used to match AFDC dollars, or maintenance-of-effort funds, must be used on eligible families for purposes authorized under the TANF block grant. In a January 31, 1997, policy announcement, the U.S. Department of

Health and Human Services clarified that eligible families are:

- families in which a minor child lives with a parent or adult relative, or in which an individual is expecting a child; and
- families that are needy under the state's TANF income standards.

The policy announcement also indicates that the teen parent provisions do not apply to state maintenance-of-effort funds because they are written as restrictions on the use of the federal grant.

The broad flexibility afforded states in the use of state maintenance-of-effort funds enables them to serve teen parents without imposing the TANF restrictions listed above. States can use these funds to create programs for teen parents without limiting benefits to sixty months and without requiring teen parents to stay in school, work, or live at home. For example, none of these requirements apply if the state uses only state maintenance-of-effort dollars to serve teen parents. Conversely, if a teen parent receives any TANF assistance, all the TANF requirements apply. States also have the option to serve teen parents through programs that receive a combination of state dollars and TANF dollars, but programs with combined funding streams are not as flexible as programs funded entirely by state dollars. As long as the state is able to segregate the funds within the program so teen parents receive only state maintenance-of-effort dollars, most of the TANF restrictions do not apply. The major difference is teen parents served through a program funded by both TANF and state dollars will count in the calculation of the work participation rate. This is true even if the teens are receiving benefits only from the state stream of funding. Individuals served through a separate, state-only funded program are not included in the calculation of the work participation rate.¹⁰

States also have the flexibility to segment the teen parent population and create different eligibility rules for different subgroups. For example, states may want to serve teen parents

who are eighteen and nineteen years old under the federal TANF block grant and serve minor teen parents with state funds. States can also segment the population by location if, for example, services for teen parents are available only in some regions of the state. Given this

flexibility, states will want to consider the impact of the TANF restrictions on both teens and their children and to explore all of the options for helping teen parents become economically self-sufficient.

Components of a Comprehensive Teen Parent Policy

In December 1996, more than thirty researchers, state program administrators, direct service providers, and policymakers convened in Washington, D.C., to discuss the impact of the new welfare legislation on teen parents. The meeting brought together policymakers and experts in teen parenthood to develop recommendations for states as they design their welfare reform policies. The experts agreed that helping teen parents is frequently a long-term process that requires comprehensive and diverse strategies.

Participants urged Governors to identify the results that an effective teen parent policy should achieve and to work with communities to design strategies that work. They suggested that the following results are characteristic of effective teen parent policies.

- Teen parents show progress toward economic self-sufficiency. Economic self-sufficiency means moving out of poverty rather than just leaving the welfare roll.
- Children of teen parents exhibit age-appropriate, healthy development, including cognitive and emotional development and school readiness.
- Teen parents exhibit healthy development. Healthy development includes mental, physical, and social development, as well as appropriate parenting skills and civic responsibility. Teens also develop communication skills and the ability to make reasoned decisions about healthy life choices.
- Teen parents and their children live in a safe, nurturing, and structured living environment.
- Teen parents delay subsequent births and reduce the number of subsequent out-of-wedlock births. Delaying subsequent births

enables parents to continue their own development and to establish a strong bond with their child.

- Fathers take responsibility for their children, providing support for both the mother and the children. Support includes financial support, as well as parenting and emotional support.

The challenge for states is designing programs that achieve these results. Many states have been experimenting with programs through the federal waiver process or multisite demonstrations (see Appendix B). Unfortunately, years of experimentation have only confirmed the difficulty of helping teen parents become self-sufficient and the need to continue to evaluate the impact of teen parent programs. As states begin to design or redesign their teen parent programs, learning what has been proven effective is an important first step. States will want to build on the strategies that the research shows are effective in serving teen parents and evaluate the effectiveness of new programs for helping teen parents become self-sufficient (see Appendix A).

Drawing on the experience of their own teen parent programs and research, meeting participants suggested that the following strategies

will contribute to a comprehensive program for achieving the desired results for teen parents.

Provide Alternative or Enhanced Education Opportunities

Poor high school performance is characteristic of many teen parents, with 25 percent of them dropping out of school before they become pregnant and another 37 percent of them dropping out after the pregnancy.¹¹ Many of these teens have not excelled in traditional school settings, but they need to achieve educational success in order to become self-sufficient. The key is to reach teen parents early, when they learn of the pregnancy, and to keep them attached to school.¹² It is much more difficult to persuade teens to return to school once they leave, and the longer they are away, the harder the task becomes.

Schools need to become more friendly to teen parents if young parents are going to achieve the educational success they need to become self-sufficient. Some school systems actually encourage teens to drop out of school because staff, administrators, or school boards are not supportive of teaching teen parents. Inflexible attendance and credit policies also lead many teen parents to drop out of school. Keeping teen parents in school means adopting school policies that accommodate the different demands teen parents face in their lives. Policies that encourage teen parents to stay in school include open enrollment, flexible credit and attendance policies, and home instruction during extended health-related absences.¹³ Support services, including transportation and child care, also are necessary. These policies and support services acknowledge that teen parents face different challenges than typical teens and accommodate their needs in order to help them succeed in school.

Enhanced school-based programs designed for teen parents can be very effective for teen parents who are in school. School offers a structured setting to teach teens about prenatal health, parenting, and child care, while encouraging them to remain in school and develop to their full potential. Ohio offers Graduation, Reality, And Dual-Role Skills

(GRADS), an in-school program for pregnant teens, teen mothers, and teen fathers. GRADS teachers are located in high schools, middle schools, career centers, and alternative schools in urban, suburban, and rural districts (see description of Ohio's GRADS program).

School-to-work and Job Corps programs can also increase teen parents' opportunities to improve their skills and become employable. School-to-work programs recognize that most students learn best when taught within the context of an activity that they find meaningful, fulfilling, challenging, and relevant. Work often provides the motivation necessary for students to hone their academic and work-readiness skills. School-to-work initiatives provide this context, for both in-school and out-of-school youth, by linking academic instruction to learning set within the context of careers and contemporary workplaces. These efforts enable more young people to meet high academic standards and be prepared to pursue postsecondary education or a job in a high-skill, high-wage career path.

The Job Corps program can help some teen parents obtain the skills they need to become economically self-sufficient. Job Corps is the nation's largest residential job training and education program for at-risk youth ages sixteen to twenty-four who have either dropped out of high school or graduated from school but need further skill development. The 112 federally administered Job Corps centers, located in forty-six states, the commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, offer a comprehensive array of services, including:

- entry diagnostic testing, academic education, and high school equivalency classes;
- occupational exploration, vocational training, and work experience opportunities;
- meals, housing, medical care, counseling, and related support services; and
- postprogram placement and support for students.

Ohio's GRADS

Graduation, Reality, And Dual-Role Skills (GRADS) is an in-school program for pregnant teens and male and female parenting teens. GRADS' objectives include school retention and graduation, development of positive health care practices and parenting skills, identification of career goals, maintenance of a balance between work and family, and a reduction in repeat pregnancies. GRADS teachers are vocationally certified family and consumer science teachers who attend a two-day training session. The instructional component is based on an identified list of competencies and the *Adolescent Parent Resource Guide*. Other components of the program include home and community outreach, an advisory committee that builds strong school and community support for the program, and program evaluation. Compared with all Ohio teen parents, GRADS students have a lower school dropout rate, a higher early prenatal care rate, a lower rate of low-birthweight babies, and a lower rate of subsequent pregnancies. The GRADS program is available for students in 75 percent of Ohio's school districts, and the GRADS model has been disseminated to schools in sixteen other states.

Five residential Job Corps centers operate single-parent programs in which the children live at the center with their parent. These centers are located in Alaska, Georgia, Iowa, New York, and North Dakota. Sixteen non-residential facilities include Head Start and on-site child care services for the children of participants.

Focus on Improving Child Outcomes

A comprehensive teen parent policy examines the implications of the policy on the children of teen parents and makes improving child outcomes one of the goals. Given the intergenerational problem of adolescent parenthood, improving child outcomes is a prevention strategy that pays for itself. Parents and Teachers (PAT) is an award-winning early childhood parent education and family support program with a special adaptation for teen parents. It is a home-school-community partnership based on the philosophy that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers. Trained PAT professionals offer teen parents timely information on their children's development and learning through regularly scheduled home visits, parenting education, group meetings, screenings, and referrals to other social service agencies. For teen parents, the home visits can include the teens' parents and other extended family members. In many areas, PAT works in tandem with the school and community to encourage teen parents to graduate. Parents as Teachers was established by the Missouri

Department of Education, and local programs are operating in forty-seven states, the District of Columbia, and five foreign countries.

If teen parents are going to participate in school or job training programs, improving child outcomes will require quality child care that is accessible, affordable, and flexible. However, many teens are reluctant to pursue the option of formal child care, preferring to rely on friends or family to watch their children. Teens are more likely to use a child care center if it is located near their home or school. California, Florida, and Illinois provide onsite child care reimbursed through the education system for teen mothers enrolled in certain high schools. Although these programs differ in each state, they enable mothers to spend time with their children during the day and provide the opportunity to teach parenting and child development through day-to-day interaction. Many schools also offer formal classes, such as PAT, to improve the parenting skills of the teen and the developmental outcomes of the child.

Increasing the availability of successful child development programs such as Early Head Start will also improve child outcomes. The research shows that Head Start and the Perry Preschool programs improve outcomes for participating children, including reducing the incidence of out-of-wedlock births among the girls when they become older.¹⁴ Quality child care also improves child outcomes, but it is expensive. Infant care is particularly costly and

may not be as readily available as care for older children. Subsidizing child care and meeting the increased demand for infant care will challenge many communities. States can maintain quality by promoting training for child care providers and appropriate standards of care.

Engage the Fathers

Children benefit from the active involvement of both parents. Meeting participants encouraged states to create programs that engage the father of the child, or the significant male in the teen mother's life. Attendees recommended that states promote activities that build a relationship between the service provider and the father, including conducting outreach to fathers, engaging them gradually, offering separate programs for fathers, and conveying the importance of both their financial and emotional support. As part of the JOBS intake process for teen parents, the Illinois case manager completes child support information and pursues child support while the teen is enrolled in the program. In Ohio some child support enforcement workers are assigned exclusively to teen parent cases, and they work closely with GRADS teachers. In addition, GRADS teachers actively seek out fathers and expectant fathers enrolled in their schools and encourage them to enroll in GRADS. At St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home in Maryland, staff try to include the males early in the pregnancy by inviting them to attend birthing classes. The earlier fathers are engaged, the more likely they are to help raise their children.

Many of the fathers lack the skills to succeed in the job market and have difficulty providing for their children when they are still struggling to provide for themselves. The new welfare reform law strengthens states' ability to establish paternity and child support orders, but it does not directly address how low-income, unskilled fathers will obtain jobs to help them pay child support.¹⁵ However, new flexibility in the use of TANF funds appears to allow states to use these funds for programs to help noncustodial parents gain employment.¹⁶

States can use the opportunities created by welfare reform to provide the necessary services to help both parents achieve self-sufficiency and become good parents. Ultimately, this will help noncustodial parents become more capable of meeting their child support obligations.

Several meeting participants indicated that the message to fathers is often contradictory and that states need to recognize the trade-off in policies directed to fathers. Paternity establishment, child support, and statutory rape laws may be effective in deterring some teens and adults from becoming parents, but they may also create disincentives for fathers to assume responsibility for their children and for mothers to identify the father. Adult fathers who want to assume responsibility may be discouraged from doing so for fear of prosecution under statutory rape laws. Some states are strengthening their statutory rape laws, and many states are increasing efforts to enforce the existing laws. The new welfare law requires the U.S. Department of Justice to establish and implement a program that educates state and local criminal law enforcement officials on the prevention and prosecution of statutory rape.¹⁷ Paternity establishment laws that sanction mothers for not cooperating may, in some cases, expose the mothers and children to harm. Just as some mothers struggle with substance abuse and neglect their children, some fathers behave in an irresponsible or violent manner. State policies and service providers must acknowledge the potential for harm from engaging the father and have the flexibility to protect the mother and child, when necessary.

Include the Individual, Family, School, and Community in the Design of Interventions

A comprehensive strategy recognizes that many people have influence on a teen parent's behavior and includes them in designing a plan to help the teen. The teen parent should play a primary role in determining the best way to help herself become self-sufficient, but including the family, school, and community support systems will further enhance the

effectiveness of the design. The teen's mother generally plays a dominant role in the teen's life, and establishing roles and responsibilities between the teen mother and the grandmother relative to the new baby may be difficult. Effective programs will recognize the importance of respecting the role of the grandmother, include the grandmother in reinforcing the messages of good parenting at home, and identify activities the teen mother and grandmother can do together to work toward mutual goals. At times, the philosophies of the case worker, the teen mother, and the grandmother will conflict. Effective programs will identify the different approaches to parenting and attempt to resolve the conflict. This component of a comprehensive approach focuses on relationships and attempts to change patterns of behavior that may make it more difficult for the teen parent to become economically self-sufficient. The siblings of teen parents should also be included, as many siblings share the same risks of becoming teen parents.

Involve the Community

Participants at the meeting agreed that effective strategies for serving teen parents involve the community, both in establishing and implementing the policy recommendations. "Community" includes local government and social service agencies, as well as advocacy organizations, businesses, and religious groups. These stakeholders benefit from reducing welfare dependency among teen parents, and bringing them together begins the process of assessing local capacity and maximizing local resources. The new welfare law gives states additional flexibility to design strategies that address the needs of individual communities and to target resources where they can have the greatest impact. States may want to decentralize decisionmaking to the community level and allocate money to promote community involvement. However, one participant cautioned against distributing money to communities without helping them develop their programs. Some communities will need more assistance than others in assessing their

needs and identifying the results to be achieved. States also have a role in holding communities accountable for those results once the communities receive funds.

Several states have successfully decentralized decisionmaking and funding to the local level for programs related to early childhood development. For example, North Carolina and Ohio are promoting coordination and collaboration among state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and parents. Local planning councils or partnerships assess capacity and modify existing programs to produce better results for children. Communities receive technical support and state funds to carry out their programs to achieve the identified goals. North Carolina's Smart Start and the Ohio Family and Children First initiative are two models for using state funds to promote community involvement. Bright Beginnings is a public-private partnership designed to improve the lives of Colorado children in the first three years of their lives. This initiative receives no public funding but involves the community in addressing problems such as child care and health care for low-income children (see description of Colorado's Bright Beginnings).

The business community is an important partner for improving and increasing employment opportunities for teen parents. Teens who progress in their education must have real job opportunities with career ladders that can help them advance toward economic self-sufficiency and benefits that can extend to their families. This is especially true under the new welfare law, which requires recipients to work a minimum of twenty hours once they reach age eighteen, or age nineteen if they are enrolled in school full time. Engaging employers in strategies to promote economic self-sufficiency among teen parents should be coordinated with other efforts to encourage employers to adopt family-friendly policies, such as flexible work schedules and subsidized and/or onsite child care. Colorado's Bright Beginnings Child Care Subcommittee developed a resource guide to encourage businesses to adopt family-friendly

13

Colorado's Bright Beginnings

Bright Beginnings is a unique partnership between the public and private sectors—including civic, religious, government, business, nonprofit, and media partners—designed to improve the lives of children in the first three years of their lives. Its goal is to mobilize every aspect of the community to better support young children and their families through the following activities.

Warm welcome. In 28 counties in Colorado, more than 250 trained community volunteers visit families with newborn babies to create a spirit of celebration and welcome around each child's birth. At the parent's request, a volunteer will visit the home to support the parent; bring a gift for the child from the community; and give the parent a booklet containing useful information on parenting, child development, and child care, as well as a list of neighborhood resources. When requested, volunteers will help parents access these resources.

Child-friendly workplaces and high-quality, developmentally appropriate child care. A resource guide on family-friendly policies for businesses is being distributed to employers around the state. These policies not only benefit the children and families of employees, but also result in higher retention rates, productivity, and company profit.

New futures. A special subcommittee is examining programs around the state that serve teen parents and their children. The group will endorse the best programs that promote good parenting and self-sufficiency.

Health care for young children. Bright Beginnings was influential in expanding the Colorado Child Health Plan to children of the working poor in rural areas of the state. New parents are informed of this program during their warm welcome visit.

Bright Beginnings receives financial support from numerous corporations, foundations, local employers, and individuals. It receives no government funds, though Governor Roy Romer has been active in promoting the program as co-chair of the steering committee. Brad Butler, former chairman of the board for Procter & Gamble, and Tom Norton, Republican leader of the Colorado Senate, also serve as co-chairs.

policies. Many companies have found that these policies reduce absenteeism while increasing loyalty and productivity among all employees, not just low-income employees.

Establish Clear and Immediate Consequences for Behaviors

When behaviors are clearly linked to consequences, teen parents benefit from the additional structure in their lives. An effective teen parent policy incorporates consequences for both negative and positive behaviors, and it identifies positive behaviors related to the achievement of both short- and long-term goals. Above all, the consequences for behaviors must be realistic, the policy must be clearly understood by the teens, and the teens must perceive the enforcement of the policy as fair.

Several states are experimenting with monetary sanctions and rewards to encourage education. Wisconsin's Learnfare, Ohio's Learning,

Earning And Parenting (LEAP), and California's Cal-Learn are three programs that include positive and/or negative consequences for teens based on their school attendance or performance. Although several states use monetary sanctions and rewards, participants at the meeting had mixed views on their use. Such incentives are politically popular and can motivate both caseworkers and teens, but they are not always effective. School attendance or performance policies also are difficult to implement, requiring good automated systems to track and enforce the policies effectively.

Even with good tracking systems, many teens do not manage their own finances. Fluctuations in the family benefit level may be too removed from their daily existence. This is especially true if the fluctuation occurs several months after the teen's action because of the schedule for sanctioning or a delay in processing the sanction or reward. The Cal-Learn program increases or decreases the

household's cash assistance benefit a maximum of four times a year based on the teen parent's progress in school (see description of California's Cal-Learn). Anecdotal evidence suggests that teens are unaware of when they are being sanctioned or rewarded. The Learnfare program in Wisconsin sanctions family benefits each month based on the teen's school attendance, and an evaluation of the program shows it has been unsuccessful in improving attendance. More research is needed on when monetary sanctions and rewards are effective and what level of sanction or reward is appropriate. LEAP has been successful in changing the behavior of teen parents enrolled in school by using sanctions and rewards, and an evaluation of the program was recently extended in order to learn more about the role of financial incentives and sanctions (see Appendix A). States should also consider policies with incentives that are not financial, such as token gifts, trips, or awards. These

rewards may be as effective or more effective than financial rewards.

Ensure Flexibility to Pursue Strategies That Work

Teen parents are a diverse population. They represent a wide spectrum of developmental stages, and their previous experiences may include varying degrees of homelessness, sexual abuse, and substance abuse. Multiple strategies are necessary to address this diversity, as well as the different challenges that states face in serving both rural and urban communities. Effective strategies will be age-appropriate, will be tailored to the experiences of the individual, will provide a continuum of services as the teen matures, and will respond to the resources and needs of individual communities.

The flexibility to pursue multiple strategies acknowledges that some strategies are more effective with certain subgroups of the teen parent population and that some strategies are

15

California's Cal-Learn

In 1994 California began implementing a mandatory education program for pregnant and parenting teens receiving AFDC. Cal-Learn is one component of California's Work Pays welfare waiver. Teen parents below age nineteen who have not graduated from high school are required to be enrolled in school, or an equivalent educational program, and to make satisfactory progress toward graduation. Unlike many other state waivers related to educational requirements, California's program monitors grades, not attendance.

Cal-Learn consists of three program components.

- A combination of bonuses and sanctions encourage teen parents to attend and progress in school. Report cards with a grade average of "C" or better earn a \$100 bonus. Report cards with a grade average of below "D" initiate a \$100 sanction. Teens can earn up to four bonuses or sanctions each year based on educational performance. If a teen graduates while participating in Cal-Learn, she receives a \$500 bonus. The \$100 bonus or sanction is added to or subtracted from the AFDC benefit. The \$500 graduation bonus goes directly to the teen.
- Support services are made available to enable teen parents to attend school. These include reimbursements for child care, transportation, and educational expenses.
- Intensive case management assists the teens in obtaining needed education, health, and social services. Although case management models vary among counties, they must meet the standards and scope of California's Adolescent and Family Life Program. This model includes an interactive process involving the teen parent, the teen's family, and significant others as equal partners with the case manager. Together they seek to define the teen's education, social, and health needs and to identify ways to meet those needs.

An evaluation of Cal-Learn is being conducted in four counties. It is designed to determine what impacts the bonuses and sanctions and case management services have on teen behavior, whether behaviors other than schoolwork are changed by Cal-Learn, and what happens to teens after they leave the program. A preliminary process evaluation will be available in summer 1997.

more viable politically. Ohio's experience with the LEAP program suggests that it works with teens who are still in school but is ineffective for out-of-school teens. Despite high sanctioning rates, those who dropped out of school before entering LEAP neither increased school attendance nor employment. Many researchers and practitioners at the December meeting stressed the importance of access to contraception and health care to prevent or delay subsequent pregnancies. Some communities oppose these strategies and instead promote abstinence-only education programs. Opponents of abstinence-only education programs cite a recent analysis of abstinence-only program evaluations that found no credible evidence to support the effectiveness of these programs.¹⁸ The majority of meeting participants believe abstinence-only programs are more effective as pregnancy prevention strategies for young teens and that family planning information and services are necessary components of a comprehensive policy serving teen parents. The flexibility to pursue multiple strategies enables communities to combine abstinence-only education programs with other strategies and to target efforts to the population for which they will be most effective.

Streamline Agency Services and Unify the Message to Teen Parents

In many states, teen parents interact with an overwhelming number of representatives from welfare or human services, education, health, child welfare, and housing agencies. This fragmentation of services is inefficient and is frequently confusing for teen parents. To the extent possible, the services and messages delivered to teen parents should be coordinated. This requires establishing a partnership among agencies to develop a comprehensive system that serves teen parents. It means starting with the recipient and building a program, rather than each agency adding to existing programs without any vision of the final product. The new welfare legislation increases a state's ability to coordinate funding streams, enabling better coordination of the services and messages provided by multiple agencies.

In-school teen parents in most Ohio counties benefit from a collaboration between LEAP and GRADS. LEAP case managers have offices in nine Cleveland high schools, and they are developing partnerships with the GRADS teachers in these schools to better serve the teen parent population. LEAP case managers contribute to the GRADS program and work with the teachers to design group activities for the teens. This coordination between the LEAP program, which is run by the department of human services, and the GRADS program, which is run by the department of education, originated at the local level when LEAP case managers established offices in the high schools.

Employ Well-Trained Staff and Give Them Reasonable Workloads

All staff who work with teen parents should be knowledgeable about youth development, provide age-appropriate support, and convey accurate information on the state and federal policies that affect teen parents. This may require staff to be trained or retrained, and ongoing professional development should be encouraged. Staff should also have reasonable caseloads so they can devote the necessary time to each teen. Working with teen parents can be a slow, time-intensive process. Ideally, teens will work with a caring adult who serves as both a mentor and long-term advocate for their well-being and that of their children. This advocate will act as a single point of contact for the multiple services available to the teen, perform home visits, and provide support and a vision of a positive future. He or she will also set goals and expect the teens to work toward achieving economic self-sufficiency. To be effective, staff must support the policies directed to teen parents. For example, staff in the pilot Teen Parent Demonstration initially expressed reluctance to sanction teens who failed to comply with the program rules. This reluctance could potentially influence their effectiveness as case managers.

Ensure a Safe, Nurturing, and Structured Living Environment

Teen parents need a safe environment to minimize the challenges they face in raising

children when they are themselves still children. The new welfare legislation requires teens to live in an adult-supervised setting, with some exceptions, but it does not allocate additional money to make accurate assessments of existing living environments or to provide alternative living environments. States must decide how to assess the teen's living environment and determine what to do if the teen is living in an inappropriate setting. Teen parents in Massachusetts must move to a state-subsidized residential setting if their current living arrangement is determined inappropriate (see description of Massachusetts' Teen Living Program). Many teen parents choose to stay where they are and lose their eligibility for assistance, raising the question of whether such a policy is effective in helping teen parents. In imposing eligibility restrictions, states risk losing the opportunity to help teen parents and their children build better lives. States must also guard against requiring teen parents to live in settings where they may have experienced sexual or physical abuse. Many teens will not divulge this information, making an accurate assessment of their living arrangement very difficult. In Ohio GRADS teachers are able to make recommendations to LEAP case

managers about appropriate living arrangements for teen parents. These teachers have established a relationship with the teens, so it is more likely that teens will tell them about sexual, physical, or substance abuse problems in their homes.

Allocate Necessary Resources and Support

This discussion of the components of a comprehensive policy reveals the complexity of designing effective policies for teen parents. However, what is implicit in all of these components is the need for both financial and political support to make the policy effective when it is implemented. From a funding perspective, this means providing flexibility to use funds in a manner that will be most effective. The new welfare legislation gives states more flexibility in this regard. It also means providing resources for essential services, such as transportation and child care for mothers going to school or work and case workers who can provide the necessary level of attention to each teen parent. From a political perspective, it means engaging the community and leveraging community and private sector resources.

17

Massachusetts' Teen Living Program

As part of its comprehensive welfare reform waiver, Massachusetts requires teen parents receiving cash assistance to live in the home of their parent(s), with other family members above age twenty, or with a guardian. For teens who do not come from families dependent on cash assistance, the state will not count the parents' income up to 200 percent of the poverty level when determining the TANF benefit. Teens who do not live in an appropriate adult-supervised setting may be required to live in one of the state-operated residential centers.

Massachusetts operates 22 such residential centers, providing shelter to 120 teen parents. To accommodate varying parent profiles, residential centers include congregate care facilities, small group homes, and supervised apartments. Specially assigned case workers complete a ten-day assessment of each teen parent applying for assistance. If the assessment shows that the teen's living environment is unsafe or unhealthy, the state will require the teen to live in one of the state-subsidized homes. Teens who refuse to move are ineligible for benefits. Teen parents range in age from thirteen to nineteen, and their length of stay in the residential centers ranges from twelve to thirty-six months. Teens may choose to leave when they reach age eighteen but are allowed to stay until age twenty, if necessary.

The Teen Living Program is the product of a partnership between the department of transitional assistance and the department of social services. The state contracts with multiple providers to run the individual residential centers at an average cost of \$40,000 per mother. This investment reflects the state's commitment to enforcing its teen residence requirement. The teen parent policy in Massachusetts places a priority on investigating the adequacy of the teens' living environment and providing a viable alternative for teens who do not have an adequate environment.

The Role of Governors in Developing an Effective Teen Parent Policy

The success of state welfare reforms will be measured by how well states move families off of welfare and into employment. Helping teen parents move toward self-sufficiency will be especially challenging for states. Teen parents are at risk of long-term dependency on cash assistance, and the sixty-month time limit on TANF assistance makes them vulnerable to losing their benefits and possibly losing their child. Each state will develop a teen parent policy that reflects its own priorities and resources, but Governors can improve the impact of the policy by making a commitment to helping teen parents, bringing stakeholders together, tracking results and expecting improvements, evaluating programs, and sharing best practices.

Make a Commitment to Helping Teen Parents

Governors can make teen parents—including noncustodial parents—a priority as states decide how to design or redesign their welfare policy. A strong commitment from the Governor helps to communicate the correct message and ensure that the adopted policy will be effective. The Governor's commitment needs to balance political considerations, funding incentives, and the findings of research on teen parents. For example, the welfare reform law offers states monetary incentives to focus on increasing abstinence and reducing out-of-wedlock births, two politically popular goals. However, focusing state policy on these strategies without including strategies to help teen parents and their children does not fully address the complexity and interconnectedness of the problems that teens face. A truly comprehensive commitment to teens includes both a commitment to helping teen parents become productive adults while improving outcomes for their children, as well as a

commitment to improving pregnancy prevention efforts.

The Governor's commitment needs to recognize the long-term nature of helping many teen parents become self-sufficient. Although some teen parents will require little help, others will require years of education and training. One Governor's policy advisor believes that economic self-sufficiency by the time a teen reaches age twenty-five is a reasonable expectation. The duration of the intervention is a function of the age and maturity of the teens when they become parents, rather than a function of the program's effectiveness. Acknowledging the longer timeframe for returns on investments in teen parents enables intermediate program success to be measured by the number of teens progressing toward self-sufficiency, not by the number of teens who leave the public assistance rolls. Intermediate measures of success could include increases in school attendance, graduation rates, apprenticeships, and part-time and full-time employment, as well as reductions in welfare

benefits. A long-term commitment to teen parent programs will improve their quality and behavioral impacts.

Engage Stakeholders to Develop a Comprehensive Policy

Several of the recommendations from the December meeting identify partnerships as essential to making the teen parent policy effective. Governors can encourage partnerships among the key stakeholders by creating funding incentives for planning and implementing effective programs, providing technical assistance, and empowering stakeholders to make decisions and take ownership. Key stakeholders include the following.

- State and local agency directors (e.g., of human services, education, health, food and nutrition, child welfare, and housing), who can contribute their expertise in developing a coordinated and comprehensive teen parent program.
- Public and private employers, who can provide employment opportunities for teen parents and develop career ladders for them to advance.
- Community groups (e.g., churches, school associations, nonprofit organizations, and charities), which can contribute local resources and ensure that the program reflects community values.
- Existing state and local teen parent coalitions, which can join in comprehensive efforts to help teen parents.¹⁹
- Teen parents and their families, who can provide a critical perspective on what programs will be helpful.

All of these stakeholders benefit from a successful policy that moves teen parents toward economic self-sufficiency and all of them can help make this happen. As partners in designing the policy, they will become part of the solution. Governors have a role in providing the incentives to build these partnerships.

Track Results and Expect Improvements

State agencies or local communities should track the progress of their comprehensive teen

parent programs and should be held accountable for the programs they operate. Governors can work with stakeholders to identify measures to monitor the progress of teen parent programs and to establish goals that communities should achieve. Program monitoring should include determining the impact of the program on the stability and healthy development of the teen parent family—mother, father, and children. The program may also have an impact on other programs or systems, such as education, criminal justice, and social services. Tracking progress and monitoring the impact will depend on the availability of data, the capacity of monitoring systems, and an agreement between the state and local communities on how to measure behavioral changes and other desired results.

Evaluate Programs and Share Best Practices

Finding information on the teen parent problem is not as difficult as finding solutions to this problem. Many programs that appear effective show little or no impact when they are rigorously evaluated. Governors will want to build on the existing research on teen parent programs and ensure that future programs are evaluated. These evaluations should document the implementation process of the program. They should also attempt to measure the impact on all teen parents, not just those who enter the program. One of the remaining challenges is understanding how to influence the behavior of teens who choose not to participate, even if this means their losing cash assistance. In conducting evaluations, Governors will learn more about where and how to invest resources to receive the greatest return. Governors will also want to ensure that best practices are shared because evaluations are costly both in dollars and time. Through evaluation and the sharing of best practices states can learn from one another the lessons on what strategies are effective and what strategies are ineffective. Appendix A includes summaries of the evaluations cited in this report. These findings and other resources listed in Appendix D will help communities struggling to design effective teen parent programs.

Conclusion

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 provides states with new flexibility and opportunities to design teen parent policies that may be more successful than past policies in moving teen parent families toward economic self-sufficiency. States will want to know the restrictions associated with federal TANF and state maintenance-of-effort funds when deciding how they design and fund programs for teen parents. States will also want to know the findings of evaluations of previous programs serving teen parents. Despite years of experimentation, more is known about what does not work in serving teen parents than about what does work.

21

Experts on teen parent issues urge states to develop policies that are comprehensive, flexible, diverse, and community-based. Programs should encourage the educational and social development of teen parents while also improving outcomes for their children. Strategies for improving outcomes include providing alternative or enhanced education opportunities, engaging the noncustodial parent, and streamlining agency services. Governors can play an important role in improving services for teen parents and their children. They can make teen parent families a priority and work to create comprehensive programs that include the key components identified in this report. They can do this by convening the stakeholders to support the program, involving them in the design and implementation of the program, establishing goals for the program, and expecting progress toward those goals.

The success of welfare reform will depend on how well states help economically dependent families become self-sufficient. Historically, teen parents have been a challenging population to serve. The new flexibility provided by the 1996 welfare reform law and the recommendations presented in this report should help states in their efforts to assist teen parent families in achieving economic self-sufficiency.

Appendix A

Evaluations of Teen Parent Programs

Although the minor teen parent provisions in the welfare reform law are new, efforts to help teen parents become self-sufficient are not new. Unfortunately, years of experimentation have only confirmed the difficulty of this task and the need to continue to evaluate the impact of teen parent programs. As states begin to design or redesign their teen parent programs, learning what has been proven effective is an important first step. Evaluations of theoretically sound programs suggest that some programs have little or no impact on the behavior of teen parents. Alternatively, some evaluations reveal that positive program outcomes occur only among a subset of teen parents, such as those who remain in school. By continuing to experiment with and evaluate teen parent programs, states will learn more about how to influence this hard-to-serve population and how to target resources so they can have the greatest impact.

Several programs have been rigorously evaluated to determine their impact on teen parents, including New Chance, Ohio's Learning, Earning, And Parenting (LEAP), Wisconsin's Learnfare, the Teenage Parent Demonstration, home visiting programs, and Project Redirection. Despite different strategies, the programs were successful in:

- increasing educational achievement (New Chance, LEAP, Teen Parent Demonstration, and home visiting programs);
- increasing the hours of employment (LEAP, Teen Parent Demonstration, home visiting programs, and Project Redirection); and
- improving child development (home visiting programs and Project Redirection).

The programs were less successful in delaying subsequent births and helping mothers to become economically self-sufficient. Three

years after entering the LEAP program, 83 percent of the participants were still receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); two years after entering the Teen Parent Demonstration, 85 percent of the participants had incomes below the poverty level.²⁰ States will want to build on the strategies that the research shows are effective in serving teen parents and evaluate the effectiveness of new programs for helping teen parents become self-sufficient.

The rigorous techniques used to evaluate the following programs makes the analysis of these programs reliable. The impact of the intervention on behavior is measured by comparing participants in the program with a similar group that did not participate in the program. For the majority of these evaluations, eligible mothers were randomly assigned to a group that received the enhanced services of

the new program, or to a comparison group that did not receive these services. Random assignment ensures that the two groups do not differ systematically except in their access to services, which increases the likelihood that the change in outcomes was the result of the intervention rather than the characteristics of the participants.

New Chance

The New Chance demonstration operated in ten states (sixteen locations) across the nation between 1989 and 1992. The voluntary program targeted mothers who were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, who gave birth to their first child while they were teenagers, and who were high school dropouts and AFDC recipients. New Chance was designed as a comprehensive, two-generational model seeking to improve the well-being of the mother and child by increasing employment, improving parenting skills, and delaying subsequent pregnancies. Phase I of the intervention focused on education; employability development, including career exploration and job search skills; and personal development, including parenting, life skills, and family planning. Phase II promoted work and generally occurred after the mother received a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. The emphasis in the second phase was on skills training, work experience, and job placement assistance. Participants received intensive case management throughout the program.

An evaluation of the short-term impact of New Chance indicates that the intervention did not reduce subsequent pregnancies or increase the use of contraceptives. However, it did increase the likelihood of mothers earning a GED and children enrolling in child care centers.²¹ An evaluation of the long-term impact of New Chance on the employment and economic stability of teen mothers will be available in spring 1997.

Learning, Earning, And Parenting

Learning, Earning, And Parenting is a statewide initiative in Ohio that strives to promote

school attendance among pregnant and parenting teens receiving cash assistance. The program uses financial incentives, penalties, case management, and support services to assist these teens in obtaining a high school diploma or GED, finding a job, and becoming self-sufficient. LEAP requires nearly all teen parents to stay in school and attend class on a regular basis. Those who dropped out of school prior to entering the program must return to school or enter a preparatory program for the GED test. Participants receive a one-time \$62 bonus for enrolling in LEAP and \$62 each month that they meet the school attendance criteria. Participants also are eligible for a \$62 grade-completion bonus and a one-time \$200 graduation bonus. Teens who fail to satisfy the program requirements without an acceptable reason have \$62 deducted from their cash benefit for each month that they do not comply with the rules. If the teen is sanctioned for six consecutive months, the next failure to meet program requirements results in the teen and the teen's child becoming ineligible for any cash assistance. Program case managers explain the program's requirements, offer guidance, and authorize transportation and child care assistance that teens may need to attend school.

The most recent evaluation of LEAP found that among teens who were in school when they became eligible for LEAP, the intervention increased school completion—primarily GED completion—by almost 20 percent and employment by more than 40 percent. However, those who dropped out of school before entering LEAP neither increased school attendance nor employment, despite high sanctioning rates. The evaluation also showed the program was less effective in moving parents toward graduation and employment after the second birth. Overall, 83 percent of all LEAP participants were still receiving AFDC three years after they entered the program. At that three-year mark, only 33 percent were employed in the previous three months.²²

The high school graduation and GED completion rates in Cleveland were much

higher than in other areas of the state. The research suggests that the following factors contributed to Cleveland's success.

- Half of the teens in Cleveland were offered enhanced services (e.g., onsite day care, Graduation, Reality And Dual-Role Skills (GRADS), onsite LEAP case managers, and teen-focused GED programs).
- Cleveland rigorously enforced the state restriction prohibiting students from leaving high school before age eighteen in order to enter a GED program.
- Cleveland offered more alternative high schools for teen parents to attend than other areas of the state.

A final report tracking a larger sample of participants is scheduled for release in spring 1997.

Learnfare

Wisconsin's Learnfare program seeks to increase school attendance by reducing a family's AFDC grant if a teen living in the household has too many unexcused absences. The program originated in 1992 and targeted teens between the ages of thirteen and nineteen. Wisconsin recently expanded the program to include children ages six to nineteen in four pilot counties. Teens with more than ten unexcused absences in one semester are offered case management to identify the causes of the absences and gain access to appropriate services. In subsequent semesters, the family's AFDC grant is reduced by the teen's portion of the grant if the teen has more than two unexcused absences in a month.

The Learnfare evaluation showed that the program has had no impact on the overall attendance of teens in the four semesters studied for the evaluation. Second-semester results did show a positive increase in attendance rates for the following subgroups: dropouts, teen parents, older teens ages eighteen and nineteen, and teens living outside of Milwaukee County. The improvements among these subgroups disappeared in the third and fourth semesters.²³

Teenage Parent Demonstration

Between 1989 and 1991, the federal government sponsored the Teenage Parent Demonstration to assess how changes in welfare rules and services would influence teen parents' behavior and employment outcomes. The program operated in three cities and included intensive case management; mandatory participation in work-oriented activities, such as education, skills training, job search, or work; and an average sanction of \$160 per month for failure to participate in mandatory activities without good cause. Interim evaluation results show that the enhanced services of the Teenage Parent Demonstration increased the rate of school attendance, job training participation, and employment. However, 85 percent of the participants still had incomes below the poverty level after completing the program. The demonstration had no impact on the use of contraceptives and had mixed results on the incidence of repeat pregnancy. At two sites, mothers receiving the enhanced services had a higher incidence of repeat pregnancy than a comparable group of mothers who did not participate in the demonstration. At the third site, mothers were significantly less likely to have a repeat pregnancy. Evaluators suggest that access to family planning services and mandatory reproductive health workshops are not sufficient to reduce repeat pregnancy.²⁴ The five- to seven-year impacts of the demonstration, such as the impact on the economic self-sufficiency of participants, will be addressed in the final report scheduled for publication in spring 1997.

Home Visiting

Results from several individual evaluations indicate that home visiting is a promising strategy for improving the lives of teen parents and their children. Mothers receive periodic visits from nurses or paraprofessionals who work to improve the family's economic well-being and social, personal, and health status. Although the home visiting programs varied in scope, size, and target audience, a synthesis of the evaluations indicates that home visits are

particularly effective for low-income, unmarried teen parents. Home visits were found to improve the children's cognitive development, the health of the mother and child, and the teen mother's participation in education or work activities. Some programs also delayed subsequent pregnancies and reduced the rates of child abuse.²⁵

In 1994 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the Home Visiting Services Demonstration. The program seeks to determine the effectiveness of having para-professionals visit teen parents on a weekly basis. It will operate in three cities through 1997. A report on the implementation of the program and a description of the sample group is scheduled for early 1997. Preliminary impact results will be published at the end of 1997.

Project Redirection

Project Redirection was the first major research demonstration to incorporate employment issues as a central component of the effort to influence the behavior of teen mothers. The program targeted pregnant and parenting adolescent girls ages seventeen or younger, and

it served 805 young women between 1980 and 1982. Project Redirection operated in four sites, with an average length of enrollment of one year. The program encouraged mothers to continue their education, delay subsequent pregnancies, develop job skills, improve maternal and child health, and develop life-management skills. Participants had individualized goal achievement plans, and they received support from peer group sessions and volunteer mentors from the community.

The impact of Project Redirection was assessed at one, two, and five years after the participants enrolled in the program. The one-year evaluation indicated that participants in the intervention group were significantly less likely to have repeat pregnancies, but the five-year evaluation showed that the intervention had no long-term impact on the number of repeat pregnancies. Project Redirection participants had fewer abortions and more births than the comparison group. However, the program did improve employment outcomes, enhance economic self-sufficiency, and improve child outcomes in the areas of cognitive, social, and emotional development.²⁶

Appendix B

State Innovations for Teen Parents Under the Family Support Act

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 mandates new eligibility requirements for teen parents, but many states already had similar policies prior to the enactment of this legislation. The Family Support Act of 1988 allowed states to have a living arrangement requirement for minor teen parents. It also required states to mandate participation in an education activity for teen parents who dropped out of high school, to the extent resources were available. States were also allowed some flexibility in determining who they exempted from these requirements.

27

Thirteen states opted to implement the Family Support Act living arrangement requirement for teen parents—Georgia, Guam, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, the Virgin Islands, and Wisconsin. Fourteen states also requested waivers from the federal law to implement policies that differed only slightly from the Family Support Act option. States typically modified the reasons that teen parents could be exempted from the living arrangement requirement, making it more difficult to get an exemption. A few states have waivers that modify how they count the grandparents' income in determining the AFDC grant. Some states disregard the grandparents' income up to 200 percent of poverty, while other states deem the entire income of the grandparents as available to the teen parent. Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Oregon, Vermont, Virginia, and Wyoming have waivers to implement modified minor parent living requirements. (See description of the

Massachusetts Teen Living Program in Chapter 4.)

Through the waiver process, states also have developed policies to help ensure that teens obtain needed education. More than half of the states have waivers that allow them to change the Family Support Act school attendance requirement for teens, including teen parents. All of these waivers extend the mandatory school requirement to recipients who are currently in school, allowing states to reduce the family benefit when a student is absent more than a specified number of days. States also have waivers to sanction households in a manner different from what was allowed under the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training program. Some waivers allow states to sanction families at a set rate, while other states increase the rate when the student continues to miss school. A few states provide bonuses to students who have good attendance, complete a grade, or graduate from high school. (See description of California's Cal-Learn program in Chapter 4.)

Appendix C

Meeting Participants

SERVING TEEN PARENTS IN A WELFARE REFORM ENVIRONMENT

December 2-3, 1996

Washington, D.C.

Leigh Bolick

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Office of Family Independence
South Carolina Department of Social Services

Donna Butts

National Organization on Adolescent
Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention
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Research Analyst
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Human Services

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Employment Services

Keleigh Dukes

Contractor
Residential Living Unit
Office of Job Corps
U.S. Department of Labor

Claire Dunham

Director
Parents Too Soon
Ounce of Prevention Fund
Chicago, Illinois

Sharon G. Enright

GRADS Project Director
Ohio Department of Education

Patti Flowers-Coulson

Maryland Governors' Office for Children,
Youth and Families

Peggy Howard Gatewood

Director of Maternity Programs
St. Ann's Infant and Maternity Home
Hyattsville, Maryland

Lisa Irving

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April Kaplan

Research Assistant
Welfare Information Network
Washington, D.C.

Lisa Kelly

Program Development Specialist
Teen Living Program
Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Ellen Kisker

Senior Researcher
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Princeton, New Jersey

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Director of State and Local Affairs
National Campaign to Prevent Teen
Pregnancy
Washington, D.C.

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Center for Law and Social Policy
Washington, D.C.

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Manpower Demonstration Research
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New York, New York

29

Kristin Moore

Child Trends, Inc.
Washington, D.C.

Sharl Noonan

Policy Analyst
New York Office of the Counsel to the
Governor

Lynne Pederzoli

Network Coordinator
Teen Living Program
Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Dana C. Pryor

Assistant to the Director of Policy
Administration
Family Investment Administration
Maryland Department of Human Services

Janet Quint

Manpower Demonstration Research
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New York, New York

Nancy Remley

Manager
Cal-Learn Program Unit
California Department of Social Services

Fran Sample

Internal Policy Analyst
Kentucky Department for Social Insurance

Betty Savoye

Teen Parent Program
Northwestern High School
Washington, D.C.

Del Sayles

Branch Chief
AFDC Program Branch
California Department of Social Services

Denise Simon

Manager
Youth Services
Illinois Department of Public Aid

Kathleen Sylvester

Vice President
The Progressive Policy Institute
Washington, D.C.

Leonard Tetlak

Coordinator
LEAP (Learning, Earning, And Parenting)
Cleveland Department of Human Services

Wendy Wolf

President
Center for Assessment and Policy
Development
Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania

Appendix D

Resources for More Information on Teen Parents

National Research and Policy Resources

Center for Assessment and Policy
Development, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wendy Wolff, 610/664-4540

Center for Law and Social Policy,
Washington, D.C.
Jodie Levin-Epstein, 202/328-5140

Mathematica Policy Research, Princeton,
New Jersey
Ellen Kisker, 609/275-2379

Manpower Demonstration Research
Corporation, New York, New York
David Long or Janet Quint, 212/532-3200

National Organization on Adolescent
Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention,
Washington, D.C.
Donna Butts, 202/783-5770 or
888/766-2777

Office of Job Corps, U.S. Department of
Labor, Washington, D.C.
Jan Gullledge, 202/219-8550

Progressive Policy Institute, Washington, D.C.
Kathleen Sylvester, 202/547-0001

U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services, Washington, D.C.
Nancye Campbell, 202/401-5760

Welfare Information Network,
Washington, D.C.
April Kaplan, 202/628-5790

State Policy Resources

Leigh Bolick, Director of Program
Development, Office of Family
Independence

South Carolina Department of
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803/737-5916

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Sharon G. Enright, GRADS Project Director
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Nancy Remley, Manager, Cal-Learn
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California Department of Social Services
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Denise Simon, Manager, Youth Services
Illinois Department of Public Aid
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Leonard Tetlak, Coordinator, LEAP
(Learning, Earning, And Parenting)
Cleveland Department of Human Services
216/987-7920

31

Endnotes

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Characteristics and Financial Circumstances of AFDC Recipients—Fiscal Year 1995* (Washington, D.C., 1996), Tables 21.1, 21.2, and 22.
2. Rebecca Maynard, ed., *Kids Having Kids* (New York: Robin Hood Foundation, 1996), 16.
3. Jodie Levin-Epstein, *Teen Parent Provisions in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, 1996), 2.
4. For a comprehensive analysis of teen parent provisions, see Levin-Epstein.
5. Counting teen parents who are married, are serving as the head of a household, and are maintaining satisfactory school attendance as meeting the work requirement has been offered as a technical amendment. The amendment has not yet been adopted by the 105th Congress.
6. Capping the number of required work hours per week at twenty for teen parents has been offered as a technical amendment. The amendment has not yet been adopted by the 105th Congress.
7. Changing the reduction from the number of out-of-wedlock births to the rate of out-of-wedlock births has been offered as a technical amendment. The amendment has not yet been adopted by the 105th Congress.
8. Child Trends, Inc., *Facts at a Glance* (Washington D.C.: Child Trends, Inc., October 1996).
9. The requirement increases to 80 percent if a state fails to meet the work participation rate.
10. For a comprehensive analysis of the use of state maintenance-of-effort dollars, see Steve Savner and Mark Greenburg, *The New Framework: Alternate State Funding Choices Under TANF* (Washington D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy, 1997).
11. Child Trends, Inc.
12. It is even more important to reach teens before they become pregnant. Primary prevention strategies should focus on teens engaging in risky behavior, such as sexually active teens or teens with substance abuse problems.
13. The Center for Assessment and Policy Development is currently working in three cities—Portland, Oregon, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—to improve school-based programs for teen parents. For more information, see Susan Batten and Bonita Stowell, *School-Based Programs for Adolescent Parents and their Young Children: Guidelines for Quality and Best Practice* (Bala Cynwyd, Pa.: Center for Assessment and Policy Development, October 1996).
14. Lawrence Schweinhart et al., *High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 27* (Ypsalanti, Mich.: High/Scope Press, 1993), 123.
15. Section 365 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 gives states the option to establish a work requirement for unemployed fathers who owe child support, but it does

not allocate any funds to help fathers find jobs. Prior to the new welfare law, some states did receive waivers to provide JOBS services to noncustodial parents. The Parents' Fair Share Demonstration is a federal evaluation of programs in seven states that provide services to increase the earnings of noncustodial parents who are unable to pay child support. For more information, see Earl S. Johnson and Fred Doolittle, *Low-Income Parents and the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1996).

16. Engaging the noncustodial parent is clearly consistent with the purposes of Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Section 408 does limit TANF assistance to families with a minor child, but it does not define "family." The January 31, 1997, policy announcement from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services does define assistance, indicating that it excludes "services that have no direct monetary value." Consequently, it appears that a state could use TANF funds for employment services, counseling, and peer support for noncustodial parents if they are included in the definition of family.
17. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law 104-193, 104th Cong., 2d sess. (22 August 1996), Section 906.
18. Brian Wilcox et al., "Adolescent Abstinence Promotion Programs: An Evaluation of Evaluation" (draft paper presented at the biennial meeting of the American Public Health Association, New York, November 18, 1996).
19. For information on existing state and local teen parent coalitions, contact the National Organization of Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention at 888/766-2777.
20. David Long et al., *LEAP: Three-Year Impacts of Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1996); and Rebecca Maynard, *Building Self-Sufficiency Among Welfare-Dependent Teenage Parents: Lessons from the Teenage Parent Demonstration* (Princeton, N.J.: Mathematica Policy Research, 1993).
21. Janet Quint et al., *New Chance: Interim Findings on a Comprehensive Program for Disadvantaged Young Mothers and Their Children* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1994).
22. Long et al.
23. Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, *An Evaluation of the Learnfare Program—Final Report* (Madison, April 1997).
24. Maynard, *Building Self-Sufficiency Among Welfare-Dependent Teenage Parents*.
25. David Olds and Harriet Kitzman, "Review of Research on Home Visiting for Pregnant Women and Parents of Young Children," *The Future of Children*, vol. 3, no. 3 (winter 1993).
26. Denise Polit et al., *The Challenge of Serving Teen Mothers* (New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1988).

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35

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